

PMI/Coach of the Week ...



Lance Cpl. Brian Kester

Starlight Range Coach Sgt. Derrie J. Kreiling led 15 recruits from Platoon 2040, Echo Co., 2nd RTBn., to rifle range qualification, earning him the title Coach of the Week. Kreiling coached one expert, five sharpshooters and nine marksmen. Primary Marksmanship Instructor Sgt. Travis Tollison (not pictured) helped qualify 84 percent of the recruits from Platoon 2040, Echo Co., 2nd RTBn., making him the PMI of the week. The platoon achieved an average score of 202.3.

6th District officer flies for Marine Corps

CPL. JOHN F. SILWANUS
6TH MCD

When Steven E. Duke reported to Parris Island in the summer of 1983, all he knew was that he wanted to be a Marine.

Little did he know that in just over seven years, he would be flying KC-130 “Hercules” aircrafts over foreign shores, including parts of Iraq.

Duke graduated recruit training and moved to his military occupational specialty school to learn how to be an administrative clerk. Duke reflects back on those days and remembers himself as a leader among his peers.

“If we had field day and only lance corporals to run it, then I wanted to be the one directing everyone and leading the pack,” the Rome, Ga., native said.

Duke’s natural leadership abilities and hard work earned him meritorious promotions to private first class, corporal and sergeant before deciding he wanted to have more decision-making power. He began to take college courses and applied for the Marine Corps Enlisted Commissioning Education Program.

Duke was then selected and reported to the University of South Carolina in Columbia where he worked toward a degree in Business Management. During his schooling, Duke’s Marine Officer Instructor talked to him many times about Marine aviation.

Duke credits the guidance from his MOI as the reason he choose to become a pilot.

“Most of the pilots you talk to tell you they have wanted to be a pilot since they knew what an airplane was,” said the 5-foot, 10-inch, 21-year Marine Corps veteran. “With me I saw that it was an option for me and after hearing all about it from my MOI, I knew that it was what I wanted to do.”

After three years at the universi-

ty, Duke reported to Officer Candidate School and received his commission in the summer of 1990. This began his career as a Marine aviator.

His career has taken him to many overseas locations, including Turkey, Italy and several other countries throughout Europe.

Duke said he believes travel is one of the best parts about flying a C-130.

“As a C-130 pilot, you are always traveling somewhere,” said the brown-haired Duke. “We traveled to Europe and the Middle East for several different operations during my first few years.”

Duke, now a major and the aviation assistant for officer procurement of the 6th Marine Corps District, now has the role of enticing college students and graduates into Marine aviation.

“This is the best job in the world for an aviator,” said the former staff sergeant of his current position, “because we are never short on words to talk about aviation or ourselves.”

Duke’s job is to raise the candidates’ interest in Marine Corps aviation and to assist the Officer Selection Officers in procuring potential Marine officers. The prospective aviators comprise approximately 35 percent of the total candidates who enter into the Marine Corps.

Duke assists the 10 OSOs throughout the District in conducting the Marine Corps Flight Orientation Program, where he speaks to the possible candidates on the Marine Corps’ aviation program.

As part of the MCFOP, several of the candidates are often taken for a flight in his aircraft.

One OSO said he believes that Duke’s animated personality has helped him use the MCFOP successfully.

“Many AAOPs try to fly as many college students as possible,

whereas Maj. Duke tries to spend quality time with fewer but qualified candidates,” said Capt. Daniel S. McDonough, OSO, Recruiting Station Atlanta. “He gives a great one-hour brief on Marine Corps aviation, which is what the candidates enjoy the most because it gives them additional information that we non-aviator OSOs cannot provide.”

According to McDonough, Duke has also helped OSOs make mission for the growing need for Marine aviators.

“The MCFOP alone has generated approximately 25 percent of my aviation contracts this year,” McDonough said. “In addition, it is a great reinforcing tool for all aviation candidates who always appear more motivated and excited about becoming a Marine Corps pilot.”

Duke not only conducts the MCFOP, but he also heads several other programs to help his OSOs. He is responsible for ensuring the OSOs are conducting physical training for their candidates and that they are pushing candidates to take all of the classes they need.

“My main focus is to make more Marine aviators,” said the former Armuchee High School football team captain. “To accomplish this, I have to make sure the OSOs are making certain the candidates are taking care of all the things they need to do before they begin training.”

Duke has also restarted another program to provide incentives for candidates to draw prospects into the OSOs offices. Candidates are awarded great prizes,” McDonough explained.

“We’ve given gifts such as gym bag and jewelry boxes. With this program back in effect, it has motivated my candidates to seek out qualified applicants to join the program. I have received at least 10 solid referrals in the past two



Sgt. Josh Higgins

Major Steven Duke, 6th Marine Corps District’s aviation assistant for officer procurement, talks to potential applicants during a Marine Corps Flight Orientation Program event in Atlanta.

months due to this program alone.”

“Also, he is directly responsible for the Flight Indoctrination Program, which allows senior aviation candidates the opportunity to receive 25 hours of paid flight training,” McDonough continued. “This program has been a great reselling tool for me.”

Duke feels he has done well in many areas of his career, and said he has used that to help him in his current endeavor.

“I have had a very successful career and that helps me to tell the possible candidates about the Marine Corps in a positive light,” he said.

“I also try to pass on to everyone the thing that has helped me to be successful: look ahead,” Duke added. “You may miss the opportunities that are in front of you if you don’t look to the future.”

TRICARE,
Continued from Page 1

area of responsibility. As the health services and support contractor for the South Region, HMHS will support health care delivery to approximately 2.76 million TRICARE beneficiaries.

Over the next several months, HMHS will be working diligently to create a seamless transition for the beneficiaries and a robust network of TRICARE providers.

For more information about the next generation of TRICARE contracts, please visit www.humana-military.com or www.tricare.osd.mil or call (800) 444-5445. Check the Web sites often for the latest information about the TRICARE South Region contract, along with the initiatives taking place to ensure a smooth transition.

SUNRISE,
Continued from Page 1

tive affect, and that is the reason we have sunrise service.”

“We are very happy with everyone who came out,” said Boyle. “What is really important about the services is that you have people from all kinds of faiths and groups who come together. So it doesn’t matter if you are Catholic, Baptist, Lutheran or Presbyterian or whatever your faith is. The significance of Christ rising from the dead throws away all of those denominations that we have and points all of that towards the rising of Christ.”

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Recruiter aides leave their mark on RS Columbia

SGT. ERIC LUCERO
MPA, RS COLUMBIA

A vital component of systematic recruiting is the proper employment of recruiter aides – reserve Marines brought on active duty for a short time to aid recruiting.

They provide recruiters with extra manpower on the streets, where it becomes crucial to bridge the gap between potential applicants and the recruiters themselves.

For two recruiter aides assigned to Recruiting Substation Rock Hill, S.C., the journey from childhood to the recruiting offices has been adventurous and at times, lucky.

Lance Cpls. Michael M. Statum and Andrew C. Aiton form an unstoppable team on the streets of Rock Hill and South Charlotte, N.C.

The two have known each other since seventh grade when the two met at their local YMCA during a game of kickball.

Five years later and two months from his high school graduation, Statum made the most important decision of his life by enlisting in the Marine Corps.

Taking up the challenge, he graduated from recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island on Nov. 1, 2002.

Although Aiton chose to stay behind, the two immediately resumed their friendship once Statum returned.

The difference was evident to the two immediately, and one evening, over a game of pool, the two struck a bet that would forever change Aiton’s world.

“We agreed if I won the game he was going to join the Corps,” said Statum. “If he won, I would have to name my first-born child after him. I’m glad I won. Andrew’s not a bad name, but I would have hated to explain to my girl why I chose that name.”

Aiton left for recruit training shortly afterward and graduated April 18, 2003. Once back home, the two reserve ammunition technicians with Ammunition Company, 4th Supply Battalion, 4th Force Service Support Group, Greenville, wasted no time requesting orders to hit the streets and become recruiter aides.

“It’s a lot of fun getting out there and trying to find qualified kids to join our Corps,” said Statum.

“Besides,” added Aiton, “it’s a great way to pick up rank.”

Both Marines were meritoriously promoted to their present ranks as a result of their hard work on the streets.

“They’ve both been a great asset to our mission here - each bringing no less than four or five solid referrals per month,” said Gunnery Sgt., Nikita Wallace, Staff Noncommissioned Officer-in-charge of RSS Rock Hill.

“They really seem to mirror their recruiters by taking a sincere interest in the well being of their referrals. They even write to their referrals while they are at boot camp.”

After their brief duty as recruiter aides is over, they’ll both return to their reserve unit in Greenville a little bit wiser and a little bit heavier on the collar, but both looking forward to their next chance to get back into the recruiting offices.

“This is my second time out here on the streets,” said Statum. “I’m hoping it won’t be my last.”